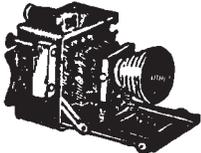




THE PRINT

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An Association for Scientific Investigation and Identification Since 1937*

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Source: American Chemical Society

Date: July 24, 2007

Fingerprinting With Light Shows Promise For Improved Crime-fighting

Science Daily — In a finding that should get a “thumbs up” from CSI fans, researchers in the United Kingdom are reporting development of a fast new fingerprinting method that shows promise for improving the collection and analysis of fingerprints from crime scenes.

Standard methods for collecting fingerprints at crime scenes, such as dusting, can sometimes alter the prints and erase valuable forensic clues, including traces of chemicals that may be in the prints. In the new study, Sergei G. Kazarian of Imperial College London and colleagues used a special gelatin tape to collect fingerprints from several different surfaces including a door handle, a mug handle, a curved glass surface, and a computer screen. They exposed the imprinted gels to a highly sensitive instrument that used a beam of infrared light and an array detector to obtain images of the collected fingerprints.

The method revealed valuable chemical information about the composition of the prints, potentially giving information about the individual depositing them (e.g. smoker, vegetarian), and the presence of contaminants within the prints, which could provide clues about what possible suspects had handled (e.g. foodstuffs, drugs) and, thus could be useful in identifying a criminal, the report said. In addition, the new method kept the original fingerprints intact and available for further analysis, the researchers added.

The finding is scheduled for publication in the August 1 issue of ACS' Analytical Chemistry.

Article: “Spectroscopic Imaging of Latent Fingermarks Collected with the Aid of a Gelatin Tape”

Note: This story has been adapted from a news release issued by American Chemical Society.

SCAFO Presidential Message July 2007

Greetings to all

I hope this message finds you all in good health and spirits. I hope you are enjoying your summers and are traveling to strange and exotic lands.

SCAFO is having a great year. We had another terrific meeting hosted by Sergeant of Arms Debbie Stivers held at Steven's Steak House in the fine city of Commerce. The "Dominos Pizza" serial robbery / homicide case was very informative and well attended.

I would like to welcome to SCAFO; Stefanie Camarillo, LASD, Yvette Gonzalez, Inglewood PD, Angela Pratt, LASD, Morgan Ward, Inglewood PD, Alex Pecorari, Santa Barbara SO, Deanna Jimenez LASD, and Angela Hilliard, Glendale PD. I would also like to welcome Cynthia Vasquez from Santa Monica PD as our newest member of SCAFO.

The message I have for you is issue is about our ethics. We in the Law Enforcement community and more to the point the fingerprint communities have an obligation to our profession. We serve the public. We do that through fair and honest work and a dedication to our science and craft. Holding ourselves responsible for a higher standard than anybody else expects of us. We are constantly under attack in the courts by so called "experts" in the field and we can deal with that for the most part. What I find unconscionable is when an "expert" in our field throws away their ethics and morals for a quick dollar or for a little notoriety. We have an obligation to do what is right and just. We have a unique power in the courts through our testimony in regards to fingerprint evidence to help free the innocent, to convict and potentially send defendants to life in prison even death. What a weight we carry. But to what ends do we go. We cannot stand idly by and watch other "experts" in our field soil our good names and hard earned reputations by fabricating evidence, lying on the stand and accusing other members unjustly of wrong doing in court for no reason other than a quick buck or to grab a head line. We have an obligation to stand up to injustice and fight back for truth.

We also have the obligation of doing the best job possible. This is done through continuing training with the goal of perfecting our science and craftsmanship. We need to set our standards high in our own departments and not give in to non-expert bureaucrats that want to water down our positions, just to save a little money. A jury should have no doubt in their minds about a verdict of guilt or innocence based on our testimony. We owe it to the public we serve and the members of our organization to preserve what our predecessors have fought to attain and what we are in jeopardy of losing.

Fight the good fight, keep your heads held high. We are the experts, let us keep it that way.

Good luck and God Bless

Respectfully Craig L. Johnson, President

Secretary's Corner

Hello all,

It was nice to see so many people at the June meeting, 68 people attended. As usual Steven's Steak House took great care of us. The food and the speaker were fabulous! We had 7 new readings at the meeting. I don't think I remember so many new membership applicants. Good job and keep it up. Right now Celeste Patchett from Inglewood PD is in the lead for the new membership drive. There are still 2 meetings left to get in on that, which includes the SCAFO Conference general meeting.

Well it's that time year that we post the people who haven't paid their 2007 membership. I know that for some your agency pays for you so you might want to get hold of the person that takes care of that and have them add a \$5 late charge. If you don't want to continue with SCAFO just shoot me an email. If you did pay and this is an ooopppss please let me know and if you need a 2007 renewal form I can email one to you. I know we are all so busy and things just slip our minds so please don't take offense to this reminder.

Donna Jewett, Daniel Aguilar, Irma Arango, Jerry Autrey, Brenda Bass, Sean Bove, Susie Cabrera, Debbie Camacho, Melanie Camacho, Leonard Correa, Angela DiBartola-McGinnis, Mary Lou DeBartola, Teresa Dickson, Ramon Escobedo, Yesenia Figueroa-Diaz, Heather Galloway, Charles Garcia, Christina Golowaty, Clint Harris, Sherrie Hill, Georgina Holmes-Watson, Brain James, Terea Johnson, Pete Kergil, Jose Lainez, Carol Lekowski, Myrna Lerma, Nicole Mobley, Marleen Musulin, Linda Pearce, John Pedroza, Kathleen Rosario, Sally Ross, Nicole Salim, Georgine Scott, Cynthia Watts and Maria Weir

If I don't hear from anyone one month after this goes to print in the Print you will be removed from the database.

If anyone has an email address and has not provided one to me it would be very helpful to have one. You will get SCAFO information so much faster and it is easier to ask you questions than looking up a phone number for you. I know that sounds so impersonal, but with all the different schedules we all have I can not always get hold of you at your work or when I'm at work it could be to late to call you at home.

To end on a positive note the next meeting is going to be held at the Wilson Creek Winery in Temecula. From what I hear from others that have been there it is a assume place to go. The cost is \$36, which includes the wine tasting before the lunch is served. I hope to see you there and bring a new member. Also, think about running for a board position in October. I know there will be at least 2 spots opening and you don't have to go through all the chairs if you don't want to. The strength of the organization is what the board and members make of it.

Until next time,

Mari Johnson

SCAFO Secretary

scafosecretary@yahoo.com

Friction Ridges Make A Lasting Impression

(Downloaded from *Forensic Magazine Issue: October/November, 2006* By: Phillip Jones.)

Among its many functions, skin eliminates waste products in the form of sweat. Friction ridge skin – raised layers of skin with openings for sweat glands – covers the palms of the hands and soles of the feet. During fetal development, these ridges form patterns that remain unchanged. The stable and complex characteristics of friction ridges enable a form of identification that law enforcement has used for over a century. (See Figure 1)



Figure 1. Recipient of the Nikon Award for Forensic Photographer of 2005, Mr. Sandy Weiss took this photo of a fingerprint with an oblique flash to eliminate reflections.

Courtesy of Sanford L. Weiss, Packer Engineering (Naperville, IL).

The Emergence of Fingerprint Identification

In the 1870s, Henry Faulds investigated the possibility of using fingerprints as identifying marks. An enthusiastic Faulds tried to interest Scotland Yard in this new method of identification, but the Yard favored a popular technique devised by French police official Alphonse Bertillon. The Bertillon System, considered to be the first widely accepted scientific method of biometric identification, relied upon a combination of physical measurements; full-length and profile photographs; and descriptions of scars, tattoos, and hair and eye color.

Despite Scotland Yard's rejection, Faulds still believed in the value of fingerprints and published his research in the scientific journal, *Nature*. He sent a copy of his paper to Charles Darwin, who passed it on to Francis Galton, his cousin. Galton performed his own investigations. He presented his findings in a book, *Finger Prints* (1892). In the introduction, he wrote that friction ridges "have the unique merit of retaining all their peculiarities unchanged throughout life, and afford in consequence an incomparably surer criterion of identity than any other bodily feature."

The dawn of the new century brought two important developments for fingerprinting in the United Kingdom: Edward R. Henry, Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police, published his book, *The Classification and Use of Finger Prints*

(1900), which proposed a fingerprint classification and analysis system to replace Bertillon's; and the British Home Secretary created a committee to consider fingerprint identification. Following the recommendations of the committee, Scotland Yard's three-person Fingerprint Branch opened in July 1901. The small department used the Henry system of classification, which has become the core of fingerprint systems in most English-speaking countries.

During the early 1900s, U.S. police departments began to adopt fingerprinting systems, while abandoning the cumbersome Bertillon method. Before long, criminals discovered that police could use fingerprints to link a suspect to a crime scene.

Detecting Fingerprints Left Behind

A crime scene may contain patent fingerprints. Examples of these visible prints include a transfer mark by a finger that had contacted blood, and an impression print that remains after a finger pressed against a pliable material.



Figure 2. Fingerprint powders Courtesy of the Wichita Police Department (Wichita, KS).

A person may also leave a fingerprint simply by touching a surface and transferring the natural oils and perspiration present between friction ridges. This type of transfer can create a latent print, a practically invisible mark that investigators must visualize for examination.

Traditional visualization techniques increase the contrast between a latent print and its surface. Crime scene specialists dust with powder that sticks to oil and perspiration traces, or treat an object with iodine vapor or ninhydrin (Figure 2). Superglue fuming, vacuum metal deposition, and illumination under laser light or high-intensity light number among more recently developed methods.

Scientists continue to devise new techniques for visualizing latent fingerprints. Several years ago, researchers at the University of Sunderland (United Kingdom) announced a method that should reveal even the faintest of fingerprint traces. They developed a dust made of

nanoparticle-sized glass spheres, which contain a fluorescent dye and a sticky surface that attaches to oily residues left in a fingerprint.

University of California scientists developed micro-X-ray fluorescence, a technique that detects sodium, potassium, and chlorine in sweat (Figure 3). When X-rays reveal these deposited elements, the fingerprint pattern also comes to light. The researchers claim that their technique offers advantages over conventional methods of contrast enhancement to visualize prints. For instance, the procedure reveals children's fingerprints, which can be difficult to detect due to the absence of oily sebum secreted by the sebaceous glands.

Professor H. Neil McMurray and colleagues at the University of Wales, Swansea, have devised a technique to recover unseen fingerprints from bullets and bomb fragments (Figures 4 and 5). Using a Scanning Kelvin Probe, the researchers measure the minute changes in electrical potential caused by electrochemical interactions between a metal surface and inorganic salts present in fingerprint deposits. The technique can visualize prints on iron, steel, aluminum, zinc, and brass; can cope with the curved surface of a cartridge case; and even reveals print patterns on metal heated to 600 C. McMurray suggests that, one day, the technology may be deployed in a portable device for detecting fingerprints at crime scenes.

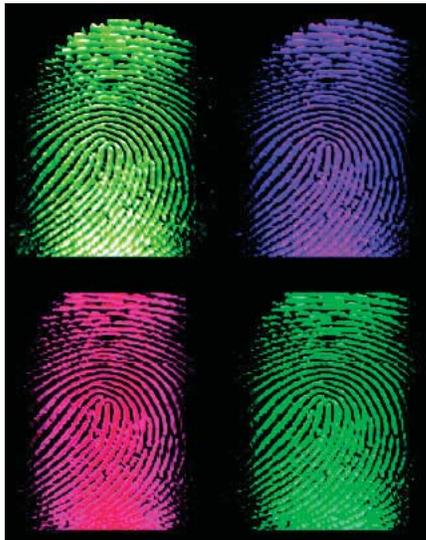


Figure 3. Micro-X-ray fluorescence technique. Courtesy of Los Alamos National Laboratory (Los Alamos, NM).

Fingerprint Identification

The ability to connect an individual to a crime scene fingerprint depends upon three basic principles: fingerprints share general characteristics that allow a systematic classification; every fingerprint has a unique pattern of friction ridges that distinguishes it from other fingerprints; and a fingerprint pattern remains unchanged during a person's life.

The common friction ridge patterns – loops, whorls, and arches – impart class characteristics to a fingerprint. Current ten-fingerprint classification systems rely on these basic ridge patterns. To determine whether two fingerprints match, examiners move beyond the common ridge patterns and focus on the unique and complex details of ridges that divide, cross, and terminate (Figure 6). These minutiae of friction ridge characteristics – sometimes called “Galton points” – impart an individuating character to a fingerprint.

The average fingerprint can contain as many as 175 individual ridge characteristics. However, a print found at a crime scene will probably be a partial print, perhaps representing only about 20 percent of a full fingerprint. Around the globe, expert opinions vary about the number of ridge characteristics two fingerprints must share before they can be deemed identical.

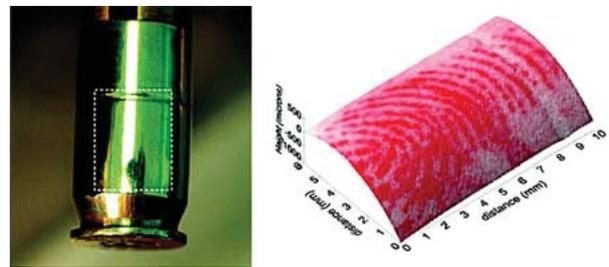


Figure 4. Left: A cartridge case bears a fingerprint invisible to the human eye. Right: The Scanning Kelvin Probe images a fingerprint from the area outlined in the left photo.

Courtesy of the School of Engineering, University of Wales, Swansea.

In certain countries, fingerprint identification relies on a point system, which requires an examiner to identify a minimum number of Galton points in the correct arrangement between an evidence print and a reference print. Examiners in Argentina and Brazil, for example, look for 30 points of similarity between two fingerprints before they declare a match, whereas Italian examiners aim for 16 or 17. On the other hand, Canadian and United Kingdom examiners do not follow a point system.

Nancy E. Masters, a U.S. forensic latent print analyst, finds “no scientific basis for a set number of characteristics.” U.S. examiners analyze fingerprint marks in their totality, she says, considering all elements of the mark. Masters says that, in the U.S., one generally accepted approach for comparing a reference fingerprint with a latent print is the analysis, comparison, evaluation, and verification (ACE-V) method.



Figure 5. Scanning Kelvin Probe electrical potential data visualized as a three-dimensional surface relief map. Courtesy of the School of Engineering, University of Wales, Swansea.

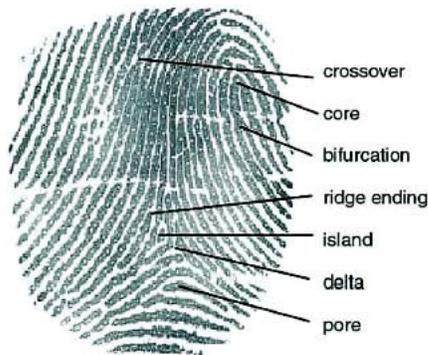


Figure 6. Minutiae in a fingerprint. Courtesy of Scott Harrison, Jeremy Beasley, Brent Carroll, and Richard Baraniuk (The Connexions Project, Rice University.)

Endorsed by the International Association for Identification, the ACE-V method for fingerprint analysis arose from research published over 20 years ago by David Ashbaugh, a constable with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. An examiner performs the analysis stage by studying the evidence print at three levels of detail. Level 1 includes general characteristics, such as loops, arches, and whorls. The finer details of Level 2 include the points where ridges terminate or bifurcate, and patterns of islands, dots, and forks. Level 3 focuses on small pattern variations, such as ridge width and contour, as well as pore distribution. The examiner then compares details found in a reference fingerprint with those in the evidence print, moving sequentially through the three levels. If the examiner decides that the evidence and reference fingerprints match, then another examiner must verify the match.

ACE-V balances quantity and quality. A low quality in Level 3 detail – the information most likely lost in a latent print – can be offset if the print contains abundant ridge characteristics. Conversely, a low number of ridge characteristics can be compensated by high-quality Level 3 detail.

Legal and Psychological Challenges for Fingerprint Identification

In June 1993, the U.S. Supreme Court decided *Daubert v. Merrell Dow Pharmaceuticals, Inc.*, a product liability case that turned on scientific evidence. In its decision, the Court gave federal trial judges guidelines for determining whether to allow scientific testimony before a jury. In March 1999, the Court's *Kumho Tire* decision made it clear that a federal trial judge's gatekeeping obligation applied not only to testimony based on scientific knowledge, but also to any expert testimony based on technical knowledge.

Four months after the *Kumho Tire* decision, a federal trial judge held the first *Daubert* hearing on whether a jury should listen to testimony from an expert in fingerprint analysis. Since then, judges have contended with over 40 challenges to fingerprint identification testimony.

Andre A. Moenssens, Douglas Stripp Professor of Law Emeritus and University of Missouri – Kansas City Forensic Consultant, suggests that several factors drive *Daubert* challenges to fingerprint identification testimony. Defense attorneys oppose such expert testimony in criminal cases, because they want to exclude incriminating evidence from the fact finder. These efforts find support in critics, who claim that most forensic sciences do not satisfy the requirements for expert evidence as expounded in the *Daubert* and *Kumho Tire* cases.



Figure 7. Is the middle symbol a letter or a number? Dr. Dror used this simple example to illustrate the effect of context during a February 2006 BBC interview.

Although challenges to testimony from forensic experts have become a defense tactic, Moenssens says that, “*Daubert* hearings have resulted in very few defense victories in barring routine forensic crime laboratory evidence.” In particular, he says that the “ACE-V methodology in routine latent print individualizations has withstood all *Daubert* challenges so far.”

While ACE-V remains victorious in court, examiners who implement the method can make mistakes. In one of the most highly publicized recent cases of misidentification, the FBI arrested Brandon Mayfield, an Oregon attorney, as a material witness in an investigation of terrorist attacks on commuter trains in Madrid, Spain. The FBI laboratory had identified Mayfield as the source of a fingerprint found on a bag of detonators in Madrid. About two weeks after Mayfield's arrest,

the Spanish National Police informed the FBI that they had identified an Algerian national as the source of the fingerprint. The FBI lab examined the Algerian's fingerprints, withdrew its identification of Mayfield, and released him from custody.

The U.S. Department of Justice's Office of the Inspector General launched an investigation into the misidentification. The OIG released its report in early 2006, highlighting several reasons for the error. The unusual similarity between the latent print and a record fingerprint of Mayfield's caused part of the confusion. However, the OIG identified examiner bias as another significant factor; the examiners interpreted some of the features in the latent print in light of features found in Mayfield's print. The examiners had performed circular reasoning, the OIG concluded.

Dr. Itiel E. Dror at the University of Southampton (United Kingdom) School of Psychology says that errors in expert fingerprint examinations can arise from cognitive and psychological influences that affect how people perceive information, evaluate it, and make decisions. "This aspect of fingerprint and other forensic identification has been largely neglected," he says.

A study by Dror and David Charlton, published in the July/August 2006 issue of the *Journal of Forensic Identification*, shows how contextual elements play a role in expert analysis. Dror and Charlton found that biasing information, such as the corroborative or conflicting evidence of a confession to a crime, influenced expert judgment in fingerprint examination (Figure 7).

An understanding of the contextual and psychological elements that influence the decisions of fingerprint experts can inform new guidelines that would decrease the occurrence of errors. In the meantime, Dror says that, "Most expert fingerprint analysis provides a reliable form of evidence."

Phillip Jones is a freelance writer and member of the National Science Writers Association and the American Society of Journalists and Authors. He can be reached at philljones@biotech-writer.com.

From The Editor

At the next SCAFO Training Seminar to be held October 1 and 2, 2007, we will again be looking for members to step forward for positions that will be vacated by current members of the board. There will be several Director Positions available. My position as Editor is a 2 year term and is also open. If you are interested in being the Editor please contact me with any questions or comments. I would like to hand off my responsibilities as Editor at the next Election.

Sincerely,

Steve Tillmann

Editor



Tour program in Riverside offers education in crime scenes

(This article was submitted by Past President Steve Evans)

02:34 PM PDT on Tuesday, May 15, 2007

By JANET ZIMMERMAN

The Press-Enterprise

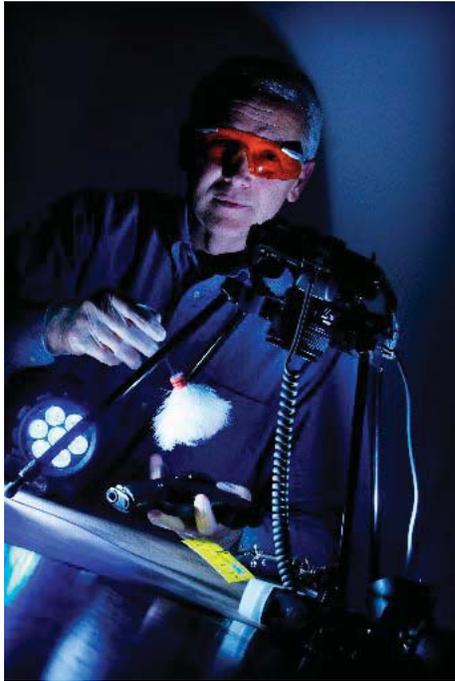
'CSI: Crime Scene Investigation' probes cases in Las Vegas, New York and Miami, so why not Riverside?

Blood splatter, fingerprints, a bullet's trajectory ... it's all covered in "Criminal Forensics: Extracting the Evidence in Riverside," an immensely popular program offered by Road Scholar, the upscale, younger version of the Elderhostel learning vacations.

The local crime-solving series stages its next five-day class starting Sunday. Price: \$1,190.

Crime-solving shows such as “CSI” have ratcheted up the public’s interest in grit and gore, said Steven Staggs, of Wildomar, a retired police officer -- the local Gil Grissom -- who guides attendees through crime-scene basics.

“A lot of them just want to know what’s real and what’s phony on ‘CSI,’” said Staggs, a former UC Riverside police captain and author who teaches evidence collection to detectives at Cal State Long Beach.



Kurt Miller / The Press-Enterprise

Steven Staggs, a retired police officer and crime scene investigator/teacher, poses with some of his crime solving paraphernalia. Staggs is the tour guide for the “Road Scholar” program, which offers criminal a forensics program in Riverside.

“A lot of what they do is accurate, but they have to make it work for TV so they do exaggerate some things,” he ! said.

For instance, real investigators rarely use plastic bags because it compromises blood and DNA evidence. They don’t work in the dark with their flashlights up against their heads and the spray chemical that illuminates blood evidence doesn’t glow as brightly, he said.

When retired escrow office manager Diane Monts visited the San Bernardino County morgue as part of last month’s program, she wanted to know why there weren’t drawers for the bodies, the way it is on TV.

“It was just a room with gurneys covered with plastic,” said Monts, 62, a self-described mystery buff from Santa Cruz.

Monts, an O.J. Simpson trial follower, admits she is often confused by some of the crime analysis techniques she sees on “CSI.” But after her “Criminal Forensics” stint she is better

versed on how to cast a footprint, how firearms involved in a crime are tested, and how to look for clues at a scene.

“We went to the Riverside jail. That was a little scary for me. When we got off the elevator, there were some prisoners in the hallway. They (guards) made them turn around and face the wall but it was still a freaky feeling,” Monts said.

Her favorite part of the vacation, however, was the murder mystery staged during dinner on the last night. The program was more fun than she expected.



Kurt Miller / The Press-Enterprise

Staggs demonstrates dusting a handgun for fingerprints.

“It was good value for the money -- good meals, we stayed at the Mission Inn, and there wasn’t too much downtime,” she said.

The Mission Inn’s five-star rating also is a big draw for the Road Scholar demographic, said Laurel Howat, the group leader.

Riverside was a natural stop for the program because UCR Extension has an eight-class crime-scene-investigation certificate program, so the instructors and tour spots already were established, she said.

Similar adventure vacations petered out in Vegas and Philadelphia, but Riverside’s dates are planned through the end of next year. It is the third-most-popular program for Road Scholar, which touts such excursions as an African safari, a spiritual journey to India and golfing pro courses in Alabama.

“We get people from all over,” Howat said. “Private eyes, psychologists, people who want to write novels. We get a lot of nurses. We had an ex-nun who became a postal carrier and joked that she wanted to find out how to commit the perfect murder.”

Reach Janet Zimmerman at 951-368-9586 or jjzimmerman@PE.com

FOLLOW CLUES

For more information about the “Criminal Forensics” excursion in Riverside, visit Road Scholar’s Web site at roadscholar.org.

Southern California Association of Fingerprint Officers

16th Annual Forensic Training Seminar

Monday, October 1st, 2007

Tuesday, October 2nd, 2007

FORENSIC IDENTIFICATION 2007 PROGRAM

General meeting will be on Tuesday in the morning. Any readings or swear-ins will be done at that time along with election of 2008 Executive Board. If you are interested in serving on the board please contact Clark Fogg with any questions at cfogg@beverlyhills.org. For registration information contact Mari Johnson at M2Johnso@lasd.org.

Monday, Oct. 1st
Registration 0700-0830

**“Infallible, The Difference
Between Scientific Philosophy and the
Application of Science in the Real World”**
By: Steve Scarborough, Las Vegas Metro P.D.

“Polly Klaas case from a Forensics Perspective”
By: Michael Stapleton - Retired FBI Agent

“Innovative Fingerprint Methods”
By: Michael Renney – Riverside SO

“Firearms Identification”
By: Jim Hall – Department of Justice

Tuesday, Oct 2nd
Registration 0700-0830

**“Investigation & Kidnapping of
Danielle Van Dam: Physical Evidence Perspective”**
By: Jennifer Shen and Tanya Dulaney, San Diego P.D.

“DNA Expansion”
By: Camille Hill – Orange County DA

**“Convincing Juries through Forensic
Evidence: People vs. Thornton/Synder”**
By: Michael Rushton – Riverside DA

**“Footwear and Tire Tracks at the Samantha Runyon
Murder Trial”**
By: Matt Johnson – Orange County SO

Riverside Convention Center
3443 Orange Street, Riverside, Ca 92501

Rooms are available at the Riverside Marriott, rate is \$84.00 a night (Must reference Southern California Association of Fingerprint Officers for the rate). The Riverside Marriott is located next door to the Convention Center. They will also provide shuttle service from Ontario airport to the hotel.

Riverside Marriott
3400 Market Street
Riverside, Ca 92501
(951) 784-8000

Certificates of attendance will be awarded for 8 hours of continuing education training for each day. All materials, continental breakfast, snacks and lunch are included.

Southern California Association of Fingerprint Officers 16th Annual Forensic Training Seminar

REGISTRATION FORM

We will honor membership in most other Forensic Organizations for registration:

***Registration Fees:**

Member both days - \$115.00
Non-Member both days - \$140.00
All registrations after 09/10/07:
Member both days - \$140.00
Non-Member both days - \$165.00
Member single day - \$70.00
Non-Member single day - \$80.00
Single day after 9/10/07:
Member - \$80.00
Non-Member - \$90.00

Please circle which day(s) you will be attending:

10-01-07 AND/OR 10/02/07

Mail registration form with check or money order, (NO CASH) to:

SCAFO
Mari Johnson
3233 Grand Ave. #N45
Chino Hills, Ca 91709

Name as to appear on Certificate (PLEASE PRINT)

NAME: _____
ADDRESS: _____
CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____
EMAIL ADDRESS: _____
AGENCY: _____

***Registrations will not be confirmed without payment**

For any questions please e-mail **Mari Johnson** at M2johnso@lasd.org. Payment will be accepted at the door; however registration must be made in advance. Reservations made and not cancelled by 09/10/07 will be held financially responsible.

One of the meals is going to be Lasagna. Please indicate which kind you would like.

_____ Vegetarian Lasagna _____ Meat Lasagna

Mystery in a Blue Dress

(This article originally appeared in the San Gabriel Valley Tribune, July 31, 2007, by Rick Coca, Staff Writer)

ENCINO - Although considered out of fashion for 1987, the powder-blue dress with a peekaboo opening below the neckline was perfect for summer.

Little did police know when they found the badly decomposed body of a young woman wearing the dress 20 years ago this month that it might one day represent their last hope of unraveling the mystery behind her death.

Through the years, detectives have followed every lead, with little luck. Now, they're hoping somebody recognizes that dress or some other peculiarity about the case.

They not only want to find her killer, they want to find out who was the woman they can Jane Doe No. 53. The woman's mutilated body was discovered on the morning of July 21, 1987, by a 32-year old transient in tile thick underbrush around the Hjelte Sports Center in the Sepulveda Dam basin area.

Strangled, her arms cleanly cut off at the elbows, she had been dead two to three weeks when her killer, or killers, dumped her body in the park off Burbank Boulevard just east of Havenhurst Avenue, police believe.

"Who holds a murder victim that long and moves a body?" wondered LAPD Detective James Nuttall. "It takes a tremendous amount of risk."

Jane Doe 53 is not alone. Since 1987, there have been 5,535 unsolved homicides in the city of Los Angeles, in 53's case, a bit of bad luck and timing have made the process of identifying her - and the prospects of identifying her killer - more difficult.

By removing her hands, the killer ensured there would be no fingerprints. After her death, detectives were on the lookout for any severed hands that turned up, hoping for a match.

They haven't found any.

And since the woman had been dead for weeks when they found her, police were unable to detect whether there had been sexual contact. In today's advanced scientific environment, such evidence might have led to the killer.

"We have her DNA," Nuttall said. "We have nothing from the suspect."

They also don't have a corpse.

The Los Angeles County Department of Coroner routinely hands over unidentified bodies to the county morgue, which cremates the remains.

Jane Doe 53 - the 53rd unidentified female corpse

in the county in 1987 - was released to the morgue for cremation Aug. 17, 1987, said Craig Harvey, coroner operations chief. A femur from her leg was saved and remains in evidence.

"One of the biggest problems in identifying people is the fact that nobody's looking for them," he said. "They don't file missing-person reports, so you really have nothing to go on."

This is a scenario detectives have considered with Jane Doe 53.

It's possible they never saw a missing-persons report for her because she was killed by a husband or boyfriend, the very person who would normally report her missing.

"Right now, if we had the skull, we feel pretty confident we could get close (to identifying her), but unfortunately, it's not available," Nuttall said.

With the skull, they could do a facial reconstruction. That process could provide a highly accurate bust or drawing, something they could put out to the public to see if anybody recognized her.

Which leaves the blue dress.

Considering the horror she endured, the woman's dress is in remarkably good shape. Police determined it was "not commercially manufactured."

But who made the dress? The woman? A loving mother or grandmother? Police don't know. They do know it was considered out-of-date.

"Not San Fernando Valley 1980s," Nuttall said, which leads detectives to believe the woman might have been from out of state or perhaps from another country.

Wearing black-strap high heels, with her toenails painted a red-dish-pink, the woman could have been out dancing, going to dinner, or engaging in prostitution, detectives said. Toxicology tests show she had cocaine in her system at the time of her death.

Police believe their Jane Doe was a small-framed white woman, between 24 and 33 years old.

The brown-eyed woman wore contact lenses and had medium length brown hair that fell just past her shoulders. She was about 5 feet 8 inches and weighed between 110 and 120 pounds. She wore a size 7 shoe.

Examiners concluded that at some point, her appendix had been removed and that she was once pregnant.

And due to the fact that she wore contacts and once wore braces, it's possible she came from an upper-middle-class background, police said.

Because of the tools used and the precision of the mutilation of her limbs, Jane Doe 53's case is similar to the deaths of six other Southern California women, although police haven't been able to make any definite connection.

"There's really no place else for us to go," Nuttall said. "Barring some breakthrough in modern science, it's going to take a phone call."

MINUTES OF JUNE MEETING

DATE: June 2, 2007
LOCATION: Stevens Steak and Seafood House,
City of Commerce
HOST: Debbie Stivers
SECRETARY: Mari Johnson
PROGRAM: Domino's Pizza serial Murders
CALL TO ORDER: General meeting, 1415 hours by President
Craig Johnson
PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE Lead by Past President Dell
Freeman
ATTENDANCE:

PAST PRESIDENTS: Dell Freeman (1973), Tom
LaPisto (1999), Bob Goss (2001), Susan Garcia (2006).

EXECUTIVE BOARD: Craig Johnson, Marvin
Spreyne, Mari Johnson, Debbie Stivers, Mariah
O'Donnell, Lisa Jackson, and Susan Garcia.

EXECUTIVE BOARD Absent: Amy Hines, Amy
Adams, Bill Leo, Steve Tillmann, Lisa DiMeo, and Teri
Eklund.

Members and guests present: 68

OLD BUSINESS:

Second Readings:

Rachel Minick Status: Active
David Ozeta Status: Active
Sylvia A. Romero Status: Active

Motion to Accept: Bob Goss

Second: Marvin Spreyne

Swear Ins:

Cynthia Vasquez of Santa Monica Police Department
by Past President Tom LaPisto

NEW BUSINESS:

First Readings

Stefanie Camarillo of Los Angeles Sheriff's
Department/ Cerritos

Recommended by: Kurt Camp of LASD Contractor
Yvette Gonzalez of Inglewood Police Department
Recommended by: Celeste Patchett of Inglewood
Police Department
Angela Pratt of Los Angeles Sheriff's Department
Recommended by: Mari Johnson of Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department
Morgan Ward of Inglewood Police Department
Recommended by: Celeste Patchett of Inglewood
Police Department
Alex Pecorai of Santa Barbara Sheriff's Dept.
Recommended by: Larry Rodriguez of Santa
Barbara Sheriff's Department
Deanne Jimenez of Los Angeles Sheriff's Dept
Recommended by: Anne Wenceslao of Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department
Angela Hilliard of Glendale Police Department
Recommended by: Debbie Stivers of Glendale Police
Department

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

San Bernardino Sheriff's Department has an opening for a
Forensic Identification Specialist 1 and a Forensic Specialist
Supervisor position. An application can be found on the
web site. There are also several openings at the Los Angeles
Sheriff's Department for Forensic Identification Specialist 1 and
2.

ATTENDANCE DRAWING \$25.00:

Lisa Jackson

DOOR PRIZES:

Provided by SCAFO, DJ Designs, Marvin Spreyne, Mari
Johnson, Craig Johnson, Lisa Jackson, Mariah O'Donnell,
Debbie Stivers.

MOTION TO ADJOURN:

Motion by: Susan Garcia
Second: Tom LaPisto

MEETING ADJOURNED: 1450 hours

"Every man owes a part of his time and money to the business or industry in which he is engaged. No man has a moral right to withhold his support from an organization that is striving to improve conditions within his sphere."

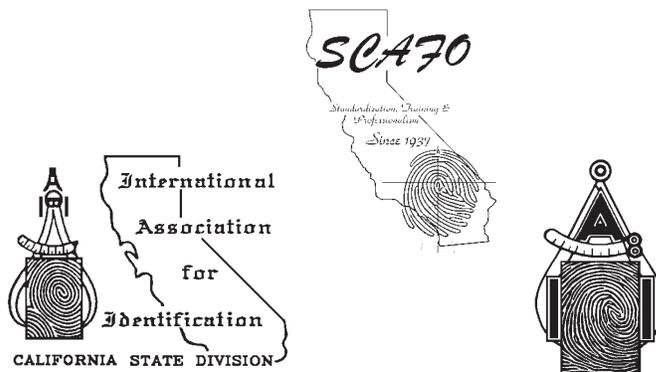
- President Theodore Roosevelt, 1908

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SCAFO ANNUAL TRAINING SEMINAR

OCTOBER 1ST AND 2ND, 2007

**RIVERSIDE CONVENTION CENTER
3443 ORANGE STREET
RIVERSIDE, CALIF.**

**CONFERENCE HOST HOTEL
RIVERSIDE MARRIOTT
(951) 784-8000**

**REGISTRATION CHAIR: AMY HINES
2ND VICE PRESIDENT
AHINES@RIVCODA.ORG**

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SCAFO Members:
Get "yourname@scafo.org".
See instructions on the website's email page.

-- Upcoming Events/Schools/Seminars--

- October 1 - 2, 2007 S.C.A.F.O. Annual Training Seminar
Riverside, Calif.
- September 10-14, 2007 Fingerprint Identification and Classification
Sacramento Regional Public Safety Training Center
- September 24-26 Advanced Latent Print Comparison and Identification
Sacramento Regional Public Safety Training Center
- October 29-November 2, 2007 Forensic Ridgeology (David Ashbaugh)
Santa Cruz, CA
- November 13-15, 2007 Advanced Palm Print Comparison Techniques
Fresno, CA

*Southern California Association of Fingerprint Officers
An Association for Scientific Investigation and Identification Since 1937*